

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated November 30, 2006, claims 6-8, 10, and 13 were objected to; claims 1-5, 11, 33, and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 over U.S. Patent No. 4,515,217 (Stout); claims 1, 9, 11, 33, and 34 were rejected under § 102 over U.S. Patent No. 6,173,783 (Abbott-Brown); and claims 12-14 were rejected under § 102 over U.S. Patent No. 6,158,511 (Wesson).

Applicant acknowledges the indication that claims 6-8 and 10 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 6 and 10 have been amended from dependent form to independent form, with the scope of the claims remaining *unchanged*, to place the claims in condition for allowance.

Claims 12-14 have been cancelled without prejudice. Withdrawn claims have been cancelled in favor of submission in a divisional application.

It is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 1 is allowable over either Stout or Abbott-Brown. The Office Action indicated that the firing of shaped charges of the perforating gun 3 in Stout causes an increase in pressure, and the upward movement of sleeve 20 to open a valve in Stout creates a transient underbalance pressure condition. Note that the firing of the gun 3 in Stout occurs before opening of the sleeve 20, such that any increase in pressure due to firing of the gun occurs before the underbalance pressure condition is created.

This is also true of Abbott-Brown, which teaches that an overbalance pressure is created during perforation of the casing string, *followed* by an underbalance surge. *See* Abbott-Brown, Abstract. Therefore, according to Abbott-Brown, an overbalance pressure condition is created before an underbalance pressure condition.

Both the teachings of Stout and Abbott-Brown are different from the subject matter of claim 1, which recites that the first component in the tool string is first activated to create a transient *underbalance* pressure condition in the wellbore interval, followed by activating a second component in the tool string to create a transient *overbalance* pressure condition in the wellbore interval. The sequence recited in claim 1 is opposite to the sequence taught by Stout and Abbott-Brown. Therefore, the subject matter of claim 1 is not anticipated by either Stout or Abbott-Brown.

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Independent claim 33 has been amended to recite subject matter from claim 6, which was indicated by the Office Action as containing allowable subject matter. Note that the subject matter of claim 33 differs slightly from that of claim 6 (as amended into independent form). In view of the amendment, it is believed that claim 33 is also in condition for allowance.

Dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as corresponding independent claims.

Allowance of all claims is respectfully requested. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees and/or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 20-1504 (SHL.0141P3US).

Respectfully submitted,

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